

THE GOD WHO SEES ME



Mothers Love, by Kolongi Braithwaite

“Womanist biblical interpretation is rooted in the experience of black women. It asks, what does it mean to read, see, and hear this text through the life and experience of a black woman.”

Rev. Wil Gafney, Phd



“One of the principles of womanist biblical interpretation is that that experience is not just useful for black women, it’s useful for anyone who engages the text.”

THE REV. WIL GAFNEY, PHD



ICON OF HAGAR BY
CHAROLETTE WILSON

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her." Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me.” ⁶ “Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her. ⁷ The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸ And he said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?” “I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered. ⁹ Then the angel of the LORD told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel added, “I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.” ¹¹ The angel of the LORD also said to her: “You are now pregnant and you will give birth to a son. You shall name him Ishmael (which means God hears),^[a] for the LORD has heard of your misery. ¹² He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone’s hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward^[b] all his brothers.”



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13 Then Hagar gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her, “El Roi” which means: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen^[c] the One who sees me.”

14 That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; (which means well of the Living One who sees me) it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HAGAR'S LIVED EXPERIENCE?

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- *She is a black woman - an Egyptian
- *She is enslaved by Sarai and Abram
- *She is a foreigner in this home
- *She is raped
- *She is pregnant as a result
- *She is upset about the pregnancy
- *She is abused by Sarai
- *She flees/runs away
- *God/the angel of God finds her in the wilderness



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- *God talks to her
- *God has compassion for her but does not/can not change her circumstances
- *She is seen
- *She is known
- *She sees and knows
- *She gives God a new name: El Roi “the God who sees me.”
- *She is the first and only account of a person naming God in the bible.

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